EYES IN THE DARKNESS

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AMERICAN PRINTING
HOUSE FOR THE BLIND

LIONISM ON THE MARCH

25,611 NEW MEMBERS REPORTED DURING JANUARY FOUNDERS' PROGRAM. These final figures were available at press time. Ross G. Witters, Chairman of the Board of Governors, will announce complete details in the April issue of THE LION and the March issue of the Director-General's Monthly Letter.

"LIONISM IS AN INSTRUMENT OF UNITING OUR PEOPLE and aiding democratic nations in accomplishing mutual cooperation"....by International Director Dr. Mariano Vivanco, Havana, Cuba.

UNITED STATES TREASURY DEPARTMENT OFFICIAL REPORTS that in their appeal to all service clubs in the U.S. to aid in Savings Bond campaign, Lions Clubs had performed in magnificent fashion, and in many communities had spearheaded the Savings Bond effort.

THE CALIFORNIA LEGISLATURE RECENTLY PASSED A RESOLUTION COMMENDING LIONS CLUB of Meiners Oaks for its generous and unselfish service to the Meiners Oaks School District in completing the building of a cafeteria for the Meiners Oaks School District. The Lions Clubs throughout the Association do many great and noble deeds of service; yet, it is a little unusual that a busy legislative body takes time to unanimously pass a resolution of this kind. Congratulations, Meiners Oaks....and thanks, California Legislators.

U. S. AIR FORCE HAS TAKEN OVER THE OLD SAMPSON NAVAL BASE at Waterloo, New York. They expect more than 20,000 trainees to be processed there at one time. Each trainee will be permitted only one twelve-hour pass during his thirteen-weeks stay. The Waterloo Lions Club, seeking to help maintain morale, would appreciate the cooperation of Lions Clubs east of the Mississippi River to underwrite a subscription to the newspapers published in Lions Communities. If your club is interested, write to Warren K. Hanscom, International Counsellor, Waterloo, New York.

DAVID LAWRENCE, WELL KNOWN INTERNATIONAL COLUMNIST, IS A CHARTER MEMBER of the Centreville, Virginia, Lions Club, and is a hard working Lion.

THE TWENTY-ONE LARGEST CLUBS IN LIONISM

1. La Habana, Cuba
2. Caracas, Venezuela
3. Lima, Peru
4. Santiago, Chile
5. Lubbock, Texas
6. Dallas (Oak Cliff), Texas
7. Columbus, Ohio
8. Denver, Colorado
9. San Antonio, Texas
10. Oklahoma City, Oklahoma
11. Mexico City, Mexico
12. Fort Worth, Texas
13. Altoona, Pennsylvania
14. Beaumont, Texas
15. Playa de Santa Fe, Cuba
16. Dallas, Texas
17. Grand Rapids, Michigan
18. Austin, Texas
19. Stockton, California
20. Chicago (Central), Illinois
21. Rio Piedras, Puerto Rico

GROWTH DURING FISCAL YEAR

388 new Lions Clubs organized from July 1, 1950, to December 31, 1950.
71 new Lions Clubs organized during January, 1951.
459 new Lions Clubs organized since July 1, 1950.
This is largest number of new Lions Clubs ever organized during a similar period in the history of the Association.
There are a total of 8,414 Lions Clubs in 29 countries as of January 31, 1951.

IT'S GREAT TO BE A LION!

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The Lion
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CONSIDER the case of John A.

A hasty glance at the pink employment card in the personnel files of the industrial firm where John was employed would tell you he was: Age, 32—married—father of two children—annual income, $4,000.

Nothing unusual about John A.?

Outwardly, no. The spring morning when John was hurrying toward the depot where he caught the commuter train which carried him from his suburban home to his office in a large midwestern city, John A. was statistically comparable to thousands of other men. Seconds later, his history became worthy of further and deeper contemplation.

Industrious, capable, ambitious, John A. appeared slated for a promising career in his chosen field. He had the ability and desire to succeed, and was working hard at it. Perhaps too hard. Lately there had been a series of severe headaches. At times, his eyesight failed momentarily. Nothing to worry about, John told himself—merely overwork. He was going to take a vacation soon—perhaps next month.

That fateful morning, as John A. ran to catch the departing 7:57, a throbbing began at his temples. Puffing, head aching, he reached for the moving platform rail, and grasped only inky darkness—John A. was suddenly blind.

As far as John's career—his active life—was concerned it could have ended at that moment. He could have joined another roster of statistics—one of the blind who consider their handicap a final decree.

Fortunately, because his friends understood that blindness is not a signal for dependency, but rather, a sign-post pointing to rehabilitation, and due to the development of the guide dog, John A.'s case history reads differently. Today, armed with fresh courage, guided by his "four-footed eyes," he travels to and from work, has advanced in his career, and his "eyes" are on the future.

The name "John A." is fictitious. His case history is not. It resembles many of the myriad cases found in the files of Michigan's Leader-Dog League for the Blind.

Early Growth

Snuggled comfortably in the beautiful farm country outside Rochester, Mich., 25 miles from metropolitan Detroit, lies the League school where its facilities are near 45 per cent of the nation's blind.

The League, a comparatively young organization, was formed as a non-profit corporation in 1939 by the Lion Clubs of Michigan to train and distribute guide dogs to blind in the U. S. and Canada.

During the brief span of time which has elapsed, the League has blossomed into the second largest group of its kind in the nation, serving 34 states, Canada, and Mexico. Two hundred sixty-one units comprising blind and Leader-Dog have been graduated since its founders, Lions International Third Vice-President S. A. Dodge, International Counsellor Charles A. Nutting, and Donald P. Schuur, first initiated the plan.

To the League's school, yearly, flock the blind seeking new "eyes"—new lives. They arrive, insecure, dependent. They depart erect, stable, independent personalities.

To be accepted into the school, the applicant must be totally blind or have only slight perception. He must be between the ages of 18 and 55, in good health, emotionally strong, of good moral character, and not addicted to drugs or alcohol.

The student's introduction to his new "eyes" really begins before the two ever meet. It begins in the offices of the League where trained specialists explore the histories of dogs and students to determine if they are suited to each other. Men and dogs are compared physically and emotionally until the match is perfect. Among the factors considered are height, weight, conditions of occupation, and temperament.

Training

The training program begins with a "getting acquainted" period during which dog and man are together constantly. They begin to know each other and ac-

Students and dogs relax . . . . . .

Preparing food for Leader-Dogs . . . . .

Clean kennels keep them healthy . . . .

custom themselves to the others mannerisms and habits. The student prepares his animal's meals, they relax together in the school's recreation room, listen to the radio together, rest and play with each other.

When man and dog become friends, an instructor takes over and the actual Leader-Dog program begins. First, there are oral lessons by the instructors—the rudiments of traffic safety, the care and feeding of the dog, what to expect, what not to demand.

Working Together

In some cases, this training period finds the blind with another problem—the need to trust his dog. To a person whose confidence has been his ability to see obstructions, blindness dissolves all confidence. He must learn first to rely on his dog's eyes.

Accompanied by trainers, the students and dogs stroll the streets of quiet, suburban Rochester. They walk together, the dog learning to interpret his master's hand, the master building confidence in his dog's ability. Their next move is to the more hazardous traffic conditions of Pontiac, Mich., then the final test when they travel alone along the noisy, traffic-jammed streets of industrial Detroit.

The result of this rigid and carefully calculated traffic training is told in the accident safety records of Leader-Dogs recorded in Detroit. Pedestrians each year comprise more than 70 per cent of that city's traffic toll. Yet, while more than 125 persons are killed each year in traffic, there never has been a blind person with a Leader-Dog recorded as a traffic fatality. This, in a city where Leader-Dogs are more prevalent than anywhere else.

Trainers and Dogs

A giant share of responsibility for the rehabilitation of the blind goes to the trainers who guide the students and dogs through their period of re-education. The Leader-Dog League trains its own instructors. Before a candidate can qualify he must live in constant association with the blind for a period of three years. At intervals, he is required to don a blindfold and live the actual life of a sightless person, eating, shaving, walking, without the use of his eyes, so he can fully appreciate the physical and emotional barriers his students meet daily.

His life as a trainer begins as a kennel boy, feeding and caring for the dogs. Under another instructor, he progresses to obedience training, to street training, and finally becomes an instructor himself.

The Leader-Dogs are chosen just as painstakingly. Most of them are German Shepherds, Boxers, and Labrador Retrievers, but occasionally, Collies and other breeds which measure up to standard are used. They are of both sexes—medically transformed into "shemales." The animals are chosen for size, health, a sound nervous system, high intelligence, a sense of responsibility, friendly disposition, and even temperament.

Every precaution is taken to keep the animals healthy. Two huge paved runs give them plenty of space for exercising, playing, and getting to know other dogs. All breeds mingle freely, reducing the danger of distraction after they become Leader-Dogs.

Thus, with the help of trainers and dogs chosen especially to get them back into normal life, the students become re-adjusted personalities. With his hand firmly on his Leader-Dog's harness, he becomes mobile. The world once again becomes a place to move about in. His new "eyes" take him to the stores, he can shop, board a bus, take a train, but most importantly he can hold a job—become an active, producing citizen. He is again a whole person.

However, the Leader-Dog alone, the League warns, is not a cure in itself, only a portion of the circuit of rehabilitation the newly blind must complete. From years of experience, the League warns those who would help the blind that they observe two *Don'ts*. *Don't* exploit the plight of the handicapped for publicity purposes. *Don't* extend pity where mature emotional aid is needed—it is only another handicap added to the one he already possesses. Pity, an emotion so easily given because it is a natural reaction, can drive the blind into a cell of his own where he is beyond help, where he becomes content with dependency.

The Right Way

Heading the list of *Dos* is: See your state agency first. They have made a special study of the needs of the blind. They are experts—you probably are not. See that he obtains a guide dog, and immeasurably important, see that when he arrives home again with his new "eyes" he receives employment. Employment—earning power—is the most necessary factor in the life of the blind person. It gives them a feeling of accomplishment, of being an active part of the community.

Undeniably, the accomplishments of the guide dog agencies are huge, but the further need is tremendous. Today, training facilities of the nation's guide dog schools are inadequate to meet the demand. Only a few hundred dogs are trained annually and the number of blind people who could use a Leader-Dog is in the thousands.

Primarily the problem is financial. The League is supported entirely by contributions from the public. While each blind student is asked to pay $150, the actual cost of developing his Leader-Dog and affording him adequate training totals approximately $1,250 with costs rising rapidly.

To the Lions club looking for a worthy project, the Leader-Dog League for the Blind certainly qualifies. But, do not simply concentrate on isolated cases, you can serve many of the blind by making regular contributions. You can give many new "eyes in the darkness."

Founders of Leader-Dog League (left to right) International Counsellor Charles A. Nutting, Donald P. Schuur, and Third Vice-President S. A. Dodge of Detroit.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Lions clubs desiring further information concerning the Leader-Dog League for the Blind activities can obtain the services of Field Director Paul Knowles as a speaker. Correspondence to the League should be addressed to them at 519 Hammond Bldg.,Detroit 26, Michigan.

Artist's eye view of Leader-Dog League for the Blind headquarters in Michigan including dormitory, kennels, training course (lower right), and surrounding vicinity.

United Nations Today

By William R. Bird

Secretary,
Lions International

THE LIONS post card poll was a long time getting under way. The idea originated with Past International President Fred W. Smith, Ventura, California, more than five years ago. As this issue of THE LION goes to press, it is safe to say the poll is an assured success.

The poll may not be the first to be conducted by an international organization on a question pertaining to the United Nations. But if there have been such polls prior to that of the Lions, they could scarcely have reflected the thinking of people in more countries than this one undoubtedly will provide.

How to ask a question which would arouse sufficient interest to have club presidents poll their members was studied carefully. What to ask in the light of the very fluid situation in Korea was given much thought. Whether to poll all of the clubs in the Association or the clubs in only a few countries was another question which was studied.

People who have had experience in conducting polls by mail know that the response to be expected from any question is only a small proportion of the persons contacted. There was, it was felt, little point in conducting the poll unless sufficient returns could be obtained to warrant transmitting the results to U.N. officials, as being representative of the thinking of business and professional men of a great portion of the world's area.

Selecting the Question

The question itself, in the light of day-by-day changes in the fighting in Korea and the maneuvering for position at U.N. headquarters, was not an easy one to form. It was recognized that the question might be resolved one way or the other before many replies to the poll question could be received. But the wording finally decided upon: "In your opinion, would the admission of Red China as a member of the United Nations help or hinder the future prospects of world peace as envisioned in the U.N. Charter?" was considered to be interesting enough to produce a great number of replies.

After a week of delay, which was to be expected because club presidents were asked to conduct the poll only after club members had been given an opportunity to study the question, the post cards started to come into the International Office. Every mail brings a great quantity of them. Not many replies have been received from countires other than the United States, although some have come from clubs in Cuba and Canada. They have come from every state in the United States, from Alaska, Hawaii and Puerto Rico. They have come too from five provinces of Canada and several provinces of Cuba.

The cards from Canada might show in the final analysis a favorable vote for the admission of Red China, since Great Britain has favored such a move. The post cards from Canada which have been received up to press time do not indicate that. The cards from Cuba are almost unanimous in their vote that the admission would hinder world peace.

As an indication of the interest taken in the poll, we report on the cards received just before press time. The mail of Saturday morning, February 10, brought replies from 33 states and the District of Columbia, from Alaska and one province in Canada. The mail on Monday morning, February 12, brought in 149 cards from 40 states, the District of Columbia, and two provinces of Canada.

Publicize Poll

Hundreds upon hundreds of bulletin editors publicized the poll, and members were urged to attend the next meeting so that the poll could be representative of their club. Only one bulletin has been noted wherein it was stated such a poll should not be conducted by an organization such as the Lions. Many club presidents added personal comments when sending in their replies, and a considerable number of others sent along a letter with their post card.

The secretary of a club in a large western city in the United States sent in some of the comments members had written to him. Some of these are unusual, and we quote them to show the thought which was given to the poll in that club, which has long been considered one of the best in the Association:

"I cannot envision a peaceful world with the peoples divided into two hostile camps; the sooner ALL the nations are included in the U.N. the sooner we may expect peace."

"Hinder at present; no aggressor should be able to fight its ways into the U.N."

"Instead of admitting China, Russia should be kicked out."

"Since the United Nations is neither effective nor important, I doubt whether it makes much difference who its members may be."

"I believe it would have helped a year ago to have had them in, but now it would hinder progress to peace."

There were many other comments in this letter which would bear quoting if space permitted.

Appreciate Poll

A president of a fine club in a southern state wrote on January 31: "We would like to ask that our poll on this important matter be deferred until February 14, as we think this question important enough to devote a full program of debate to it. We have already devoted one program to the matter, but due to inclement weather only a small percentage of our membership was present, and we wish to have as many in attendance as possible when the question is presented, so that members may vote after full debate of the question. Would like to state that we appreciate very much this opportunity to express our feelings on this matter as it is certainly one in which our full membership is vitally interested."

A secretary of a medium-size club on the Atlantic seaboard reported on his January activities report the following: "Had a terrific argument over the question submitted by our Lion representative to the U.N. Suggest in the future that Lions International make their stand clear as to the Lions clubs participation in United Nations and such—particularly as far as the *political* aspect is concerned. Our vote was finally recorded: (1) Help—0; (2) Hinder—20; (3) Don't Know—7."

We were accused by a member of a club in a midwestern city of having asked a "leading question." One other Lion, again expressing an individual opinion, stated that he had voted in the poll, but would not do so again because he thought the members voted their emotions rather than their thoughts. We do not believe the question was "leading"; we purposely tried to keep it from being that. We do not believe many Lions will vote emotionally rather than thoughtfully. But these differences of opinion are not only welcome, they are indicative of the interest in the poll and that Lions are not of one mind perhaps on any one issue. It is to be hoped that within another month we can release the results.

A Child Writes

The High Point, N. C., Lions club recently went to the aid of an 11-year old girl who was born with only one normal eye. After being informed of the child's condition by the local health department, the club purchased a plastic eye for her at a cost of $30.

Here is the letter the club received expressing the child's sincere appreciation.

"I want to thank the Lions club for making it possible for me to have the eye which was given me . . ."

"My parents, teacher, classmates, and friends, are also happy. I am happiest of all because I now have two eyes like most children.

"I am glad that I live in a city that has such a fine club of men. I hope it will be possible for you to continue to make others happy.

"A little girl in Leonard street school."

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Date Due			